

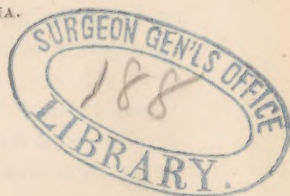
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PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY  
FOR  
ORGANIZING CHARITY.

THE PRINCIPLE AND ADVANTAGE  
OF  
ASSOCIATION IN CHARITIES.

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The industrial resources of society are called into use by necessity. Men's physical wants are imperative, and must be supplied. To do this requires the exercise of man's productive powers, and these powers submit themselves rapidly to great economical laws which constitute the science of wealth. One of the earliest of economical forces affecting production or human industry, is that of association. Barter, the primitive form of trade, is a form of it. It works, at once, a subdivision of labor, the parties to the transaction exchanging what each can most easily acquire, and finding a profit in it. From so simple a beginning, the industrial world has grown into a marvellously complex organization, of which the rapid expansion predicts the day when the entire globe will be but one gigantic factory. The farmer of Minnesota sows his grain in coöperation with the factory hands of Lowell, who spin and weave his clothing, and with the meat-packer of Cincinnati or Chicago, who feeds him. He markets his grain with the help of the miller; the merchant makes his exchanges for him, the transporter places his produce where it is needed, the banker draws against it in settlement, and the process ends, perhaps, in the tea brought from China to his table. At each stage of the series of transactions, a number of distinct interests are focussed, the influence of which is felt over continents and hemispheres. And the more the inventive

genius of man has achieved, the more it has organized, and extended this industrial association. By means of subdivided duty, of multiplied exchanges, of vast areas and diverse peoples brought into a common system, the energies of man are saved from waste, wealth is increased, and the foundations are laid for a higher intellectual and social life. Under such industrial conditions, the science of political economy becomes possible.

But the weal of society embraces vastly more than so-called wealth. Man has in his nature other resources to expend in the building of higher social conditions, than his powers of industrial production, although the two domains are closely related. Industrial faculties are to the moral qualities, as the barometer to the atmosphere, marking in its changes the varying conditions of the air. We are ever finding out, more and more, that there are "moral risks" in all forms of business, that integrity and understanding and faithfulness have a commercial value, that no system of political economy is adequate which ignores ethics and education.

While the employment of the productive energies of society is largely controlled by the necessities arising from appetites and ambitions, the development and application of its moral resources are regarded as a matter of charity. When a man ceases to be a machine whose out-put is merchantable, and is esteemed worthy of education and personal improvement for his own sake, then he is an object of solicitude to the humane spirit, rather than of calculation to the economical mind. Of course, this distinction is only approximate and general, for this Paper recognizes that there is a law of economy in beneficence, and one which is of invaluable effect, having in its keeping a new age of humanity. It is sufficient, perhaps, to say that by common consent, the welfare of men outside of their industrial life, is regarded as a question of charity. But of recent years there has arisen in many minds a new conception of charity. In its lowest degradation, the term meant a class of *actions* done without remuneration, for the relief of suffering or depression. A better sense of the term is a *sentiment* of kindness or benevolence. The higher conception of it is a *law* of love. As a class of external deeds, the value of it lay in the doing of them, without much regard to their motive or effects. The actor might perform the charitable works for his own moral cultivation, for his own reputation, or as deeds of supererogation. In so far as their



reflex action is the end sought, they are in violation of that charity which "seeketh not her own." Genuine charity must consider well what is the effect of her actions, and that not upon the mover of them, but upon the objects of them.

Charity as a sentiment relegates the deeds thereof to individual impulse, if not caprice. It tends to isolated work, and recognizes no law of self-restraint for the actor. But, if charity is a *law of love*, then it gives rise to a system. For law is the formula of science; at least, it is such in sociology, if it be not on the statute-book. Law is the statement of an order or a process, and it is discovered by the human mind through experience. It presupposes observation, classification, generalization. Charity has its laws which can only be detected by a study of past experience. It is, therefore, a science, — the science of social therapeutics. Again, as art is the application of science, it follows that there can be no true art of charity until its laws are formulated. Until this is done, benevolence is not much else but quackery, however amiable its motive. Indeed the true impulse of love cannot rest until it has found its science; for it cannot stop short of effective methods and sound principles.

From these premises, it will be easy to see that charity organization is as practicable as industrial association; that, as there is an economy to rule benevolent endeavor, it is an economy higher than that of production; for, while it increases that, it also has results in the intelligence, morality and happiness of society.

All forms of religious thought recognize the duty of charity, but no oracles have as yet revealed the methods of its application. Its laws we must gain, as we do the laws of all other sciences. They must be founded on the widest attainable observations conducted with accuracy and vigorous common sense. Out of a careful study of an experience not only in the past, but spread over the widest area, and gathered under diverse conditions, must come a knowledge of the wisest methods of charity. Now, no individual experience is great enough to enable one to come at the best results. He who, in his self-sufficiency, will work alone, deprives himself of all the advantages of others' toil, and keep his efforts in the plane of petty and primary experiment. No man in these days can be a proficient student or artist who works alone. All scientific investigators are, the world over, a community. Each branch of research creates a school or association, in which the investigations of one

become the property of all. The star-gazer who despises the labor of Kepler, Newton and Herschel in the past, and who ignores the observations made at Washington and Greenwich, who will make his own charts and instruments, will not become an astronomer of any eminence or usefulness. He walks among uncertainties, where a firm path has been trodden out for him. His labor is obsolete, feeble, unproductive. The analogy holds good in the solution of our grave social problems. Charity, which rules the resources of mental and moral improvement, is not a theory, but a science; its art is not a revelation, but an applied science; its study is inductive; its methods are to be drawn from experience.

There may seem a danger in thus placing benevolent exertion under law. In general formulas the individual may be in danger of passing from sight, and machine-like processes may take the place of sympathetic action. But were this danger more real than it is, we should have to weigh and determine whether the greater evils were on the side of uninstructed impulse, or of studious, systematic work. It is not true that the best motives of the human heart are deadened or dissipated because they are taught how to be most skilful and efficient. On the contrary, nothing checks generous dispositions so much as disappointment, and the painful discovery that their schemes to cure an evil have only exacerbated it.

We have spoken of social therapeutics as an inductive science. Induction is not an ignoring of individuals and particulars, but the reverse. Its value depends on the accurate, painstaking study of detail, which is essential to improved methods of charitable action. The philanthropist who keeps his own methods and their results out of sight, not only puts himself at a disadvantage, but he abstracts from the general cause the benefit of his successes. On clear general principles it may be held to be desirable that philanthropists should be a community. Instead of a poor sectarianism of charitable effort, where petty societies work in the dark, ignorant of one another's methods, suspicious of each other, rivals for patronage and for advertising statistics, shrinking from criticism, solicitous neither to apply right principles nor to correct mistakes, there should be a community of philanthropists in which the experience of one enriches them all, — where charity is studied as a law of love, and that law obeyed as the voice of God.

There is another important line of thought leading directly to the organization or association of charities. Social evils are what-



ever things work against the common welfare of men. Society is a unit, — a solidarity, of which individuals are a part. The person gains his highest development in that unity. Now, vice is a dissolvent of social bonds. It incapacitates a man for living in a healthful, progressive society, and it is outlawry. Also poverty is weakness. When one cannot maintain his place in a community, but falls out of its activity as inefficient, or useless to it, he is poor. Pauperism is unsocial, too. The remedy is to replace the fallen and the incapable in sound social relations, and to maintain them there as honorable, active factors in common life. Such is the end proposed by the reformatory prisons and schools of the State. The criterion of their success is their capacity to *restore their inmates to society*, as the just and forcible expression goes. In this problem there are two elements. Where persons have become incapable of self-control, or steadiness of effort, or where they are hardened against moral influences, restraint must be invoked. For both these classes, and for the incompetent ones, there must be education. Even where incompetency has arisen from bodily defect, much has been done to overcome it by education, as in the cases of the blind and deaf, and more rarely among persons of feeble intellect.

The kind of education required is not that of the text-book, nor of the industrial school, so much as it is that furnished by the great school of society. Defective classes are not a social evil; but pauperism is, and it is a sign of moral weakness. The weak and depressed, and all the victims of unsocial habits, need to be awakened to a proper love of approbation from their fellow men, to have their hearts kindled to a sympathetic glow by neighborliness and respect; to be quickened to hope by examples among their associates of courage, versatility and self-reliance; to see a world of pleasure and honor opened to them in the companionship of the refined and the pure-souled. To these add suitable industrial training; but without the other this will be of small avail. The higher mental and moral resources of society must be brought into action. Qualities of mind and heart are learned not only by imitation, but by contagion. There can be no over-estimating the value of bringing men into contact with noble natures, in whom they find higher standards of motive and character than their own, and yet not impracticable for them. The educational power of association is of incalculable strength. These remedial measures

require the largest concert of action in the community. The moral resources of society are frittered away when not harmonized and governed by enlightened views. There can be but imperfect repression exerted upon the vicious without the concurrence of almost a nation. Unequal restraints in different districts, or in the various elements of society, only render outlaws migratory. That repression which makes the trades of imposture and immorality unprofitable and unattractive, must be general. If charitable persons and institutions are to cease making their aid a premium on vice, they must act in concert.

During the railroad riots in Pittsburg, in 1877, there appeared upon the scene strange faces gathered from all directions. Outcasts and vagrants and outlaws came to plunder and burn, knowing that in the confusion of the hour they could enjoy impunity for their passions and their crimes. Wherever there is anarchy, there the lower natures of men spring into violent activity. The anarchy of charity gives rise to disorder and encourages evil. The energies of society, dispersed or antagonistic, or paralyzed by discord, rivalry and suspicion, are of little avail. Mutual understanding, coöperation and intelligence, based on wide experience, will set the recuperative forces of the commonwealth in effective operation, and the benevolent dispositions of mankind will be increased in proportion as effectiveness and blessing wait upon their efforts, and the disappointments of crude experiments cease.

One further thought remains. The organization of charity must not be regarded as the attempt to set on foot new agencies of relief or of education, but to systematize the institutions now existing, and to promote concord of endeavor. It is a reaching after a more perfect benevolent organization of what already is. The higher movement must spring out of what has preceded it. It would be unhistorical and revolutionary to attempt to displace old agencies by new measures. That would be to increase confusion, to augment the evil that a more perfect association aims to cure. The need of the hour is a wider and nobler concord of thought and plan in dealing with the depressed and degraded. The day is coming, doubtless, when the same wisdom which has given this generation its wonderful industrial complexity and development, will preside over the administration of charity. The current has set notably in that direction within the past few years, and invariably with encouraging results. It seems as if the tendency must

continue to strengthen, until all intelligent and earnest philanthropists recognize in charity laws, founded in noble self-denying love, and in their vocation of benevolence, a bond of concord and mutual helpfulness. Before their unity and growing experience, evils that seem now appalling, must lose something of their obstinacy and virulence.



